THE BOGY MAN.

In 1715 a small slave schooner from the coast of Africa, bound for Virginia, was blown far out of her course, toward the north, and put in at the port of Boston.

The cargo consisted of little else than a few families of Congo negroes destined for the new plantations of Virginia.

New Englanders did not then feel any special abhorrence to slavery. If not regarded with positive favor it was not regarded with disfavor, and the slaver found little difficulty in disposing of his cargo of men, women and children to the good citizens of Massachusetts bay.

Among the purchasers was Mr. Lemuel Clark, owner of a large tract of land on the Merrimac river, in New Hampshire. Three families of negroes were bought by him and taken to his estate in the wilderness.

Once the tenant of an English baronial estate himself, he inclined to play the baron on his New Hampshire domain. A great stockade was built upon the eminence overlooking the Merrimac, and within the stockade, upon the crown of the hill, stood his large log house. Lower down, but within the stockade, were three cabins of the slave families and the more pretentious houses of the families of English laborers who accompanied Mr. Clark to the New World. Back from the stockade and stretching to the foot of some cliffs that formed the abutment of a range of low hills was a wide expanse of level, cleared land, on which the estate raised its corn and potatoes.

Beyond the few charred stumps that marked the edge of the clearing was the forest stretching away as far as the eye could reach.

As the Merrimac was one of the highways of marauding French and Indians, the stockade was very strongly built, and from embrasures in its walls projected three small brass cannon commanding the sweep of the river in every direction. No fleet of canoes could safely pass the stockade by day. The importance of the place was so well recognized that Mr. Clark held a colonial commission as major and the stockade was officially styled Fort Clark.

The children of the fort made no distinction between white and black. The little Clarks, Sanborns, Tennys and Marsdens played with the little Quashees, Cushees and Gambas upon terms of perfect equality.

The children of both races whisked from house to house. About the hearths of the negroes the little Englishmen listened with fascinated horror to wild tales of devils and evil spirits, great serpents, huge river monsters and the gigantic manlike apes of the mysterious continent of Africa; of bloody tribal wars and human sacrifices to the heathen gods. The little black boys learned of the gay elves and gnomes, of dainty sprites and fays of merry England, of the good cheer of Christmas and the sports of May Day. The rival story tellers strove to outdo each other in the marvelous tales; but nothing so pleased the children of both races as Sam Quashee's stories of the Mumbo Jumbo, for in his native village Sam himself had been Mumbo Jumbo.

The big Congo negro enjoyed telling how when a crime had been committed by some person unknown, Mumbo Jumbo was called upon to detect the guilty one, and how, mounted upon stilts, with a long grass cloak completely enshrouding him, a great false head fastened above his own head and a pair of wooden arms sticking out below it, he stalked about the village like a giant, terrifying the guilty one until he confessed his crime.

The children delighted to hear of the Mumbo Jumbo marching up and down the paths of the African village, crowds of people dancing about him, beating on tomtoms and singing wild chants. And when Cushee and Gamba gave the battle yell of the cannibal tribe—for those were cannibal families—the satisfaction was complete.

Of the tales of the English merrymaking, none pleased the little Africans so much as Philip Sanborn's descriptions of the May Day sports. The jollity of Christmas they knew, for Lemuel Clark was not a Puritan and kept the Christmas holidays, but they wished to dance about a May pole crowned with flowers. One Christmas night, as all the people of the fort were gathered in the big common room of the "great house," Mr. Clark promised that the approaching May Day should be celebrated in English style. Philip Sanborn was told to take the matter in hand and make any preparations he wished. Philip Sanborn was pleased, but seeing a cloud upon the face of his rival story teller, Sam Quashee, he asked if the negro families might not have the afternoon of May Day for showing their native games and sports.

The request was readily granted, and on the next day Sam Quashee dragged to his cabin two well seasoned pine logs that had been left after building the stockade, and for weeks thereafter employed every evening in carving from the logs mysterious objects which even his own children were not allowed to see.

The winter of 1732 melted into an early spring in New Hampshire. The rivers were free from ice in April, and the first canoes that came up the Merrimac brought the news that war was declared with France. The weapons and defenses were duly looked to, but no precautions were taken, for it was a long month's journey through the wilderness to Canada; besides it was not likely the enemy would move at once.

May Day came at last and a tall May-pole decorated with wreaths of flowers and stripes of colored cloth stood in the broad stretch of greensward before the gate of the stockade. Around this pole the children danced and played old English games. A bountiful outdoor repast called the merrymakers from their fun. Hastily eating what was placed before them, the older negroes left the others at the feast. Going across the clearing they disappeared among the heaps of rocks at the foot of the craggy hills. All the mysterious things Sam Quashee had been laboring upon for the past months evidently were hidden in the cliffs. The children impatiently awaited the advent of the weird procession whose grotesque strangeness would cause them that delightful terror all children enjoy.

An hour passed, but as yet there were no signs of life about the heaps of rocks. The delay was unaccountable. Sam Quashee's oldest boy, Bob, proposed that they start across the fields to meet the delayed procession. The other children eagerly agreed, and off they all started.

Picking their way over the soft plowed land, they went toward the hills, all the time on the alert, expecting to turn and flee at any moment before the approach of the Mumbo Jumbo.

"Why, they are not at the cliffs at all," said Mary Clark when the children had reached the middle of the clearing. "Look over the edge of pines."

Sure enough, they could see dark figures among the burned trees at the border of the forest hastily concealing themselves from the gaze of the little crowd so suddenly turned upon them.

"I saw 'em!" cried Luke Sanborn. "One of 'em had a feather hat on. I could see it just as plain, but I didn't see anybody on stilts with a false face. Let's go over."

"It's too far away to see any stilts or false faces and we had better stay here," said Patience Tenney, the oldest of the group.

Just at that moment there sounded from the fort the harsh blare of the trumpet used to call the laborers from the fields at mealtime. Looking back the children saw a sudden flash of flame, and a deep roar of a cannon reverberated among the hills. The next instant the crackle of musketry came faintly from the Merrimac; it was answered from the fort; a blood curdling war whoop burst from the edge of the clearing near them and three Indian warriors raised from among the stumps and came leaping toward them!

Almost before they could turn toward the fort loud drum peals sounded from the rocks at the foot of the hills. As if in reply to the war whoops there rang forth the wild, savage, African battle cry. There stalked forth into the clearing two immense, hideous giants, accompanied by four strangely bedecked creatures beating on tomtoms and screaming forth the battle cry of the Ansgari cannibals. Fearful, huge, red, distorted gashes of mouths, knobby, black cheeks, terribly staring white eyes, altogether diabolical faces had these two giants, stalking stiffly out of the clearing. Scarcely less terrifying were the bepainted creatures with moose horns rising above their heads, who leaped and danced along before the giants.

Away, with loud shrieks, the children rushed toward the fort. The Indians halted amazed. The giants and their attendants halted too. They had just discovered the Indians. They had thought the firing of the cannon a salute in honor of the day.

The Indians hesitated, and the Mumbo Jumbos hesitated.

But one cannot stand still on stilts. The tallest of the Mumbo Jumbos staggered forward and one of the Indians turned and fled. The other giant advanced, the attendants struck their drums again, and again the horrid Ansgari war song pealed forth, and the second Indian followed the first. The third Indian dropped on one knee, and before the Mumbo Jumbos could turn he drew a bead and sent a bullet crashing through the wooden forehead of Sam Quashee's mask.

The giant neither fell nor faltered, and with a cry of terror the last Indian rushed after his companions down the river edge.

Slowly, as befitting their brave conquests and the softness of the ground, the procession of Mumbo Jumbos passed across the field and through the gate of the fort where the children had just preceded them. The idols of Africa had overcome the redskins. The rising generation of Clarks, Tennys, Sanborns and Marsdens would never doubt that fact.

Meantime the white coated body of a French officer went floating down the river, and two canoes rapidly disappeared up the river. The attack upon Fort Clark had been repulsed. The war with France had begun.—Atlanta Constitution.